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Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International Relations

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Spring 2014

# Masters Research Project

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## **DIPL 6311NC: Masters Research Project**

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 Office Hours: By appointment

### **Course Objectives:**

This class is the capstone of your graduate experience. As such, you will be drawing on the lessons that you have learned in DIPL 6310 to develop and execute a research project. The class will be a mix of one-on-one sessions as well as traditional meetings.

My goals for you are two-fold:

- Write a publishable quality manuscript that tests hypotheses head to head either qualitatively or quantitatively.
- Finish this class with a polished op-ed based on your research that's perfect as a writing sample.

### **Course Materials:**

Two textbooks have been ordered for this course. We will not have assignments from these texts. The Van Evera work is a good reference for qualitative work, and the Johnson and Reynolds text is geared for quantitative work.

Stephen Van Evera. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. ISBN: 0-8014-8457-X.

Janet B. Johnson and H.T. Reynolds. 2012 *Political Science Research Methods* 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. SAGE/CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-60781-689-0.

### **Evaluation:**

Your grade in this class will be based on the following:

Research Design (10%)  
 Rough Draft (20%)  
 Final Paper (50%)  
 Op-Ed Rough Draft (10%)  
 Op-Ed Final (10%)

More information on each of these elements can be found on the last page of the syllabus.

### **Other Course Policies:**

Late work will not be accepted in this class.

Attendance at each of the scheduled class meetings is mandatory.

Successful completion of the project will require you to use considerable library research. Please note the following: 1) Wikipedia is not acceptable as a valid source of information and as such should not be cited;<sup>1</sup> 2) You might find Chapter 3 of the Johnson text (which deals with writing a literature review) helpful. 3) If you have further library questions, you should discuss them with Diplomacy's library liaison, Naomi Gold ([naomi.gold@shu.edu](mailto:naomi.gold@shu.edu))

Students with projects stemming from work submitted for earlier classes must discuss them with me in advance of submission.

Late changes to one's research project must be approved by me.

The final version of the manuscript must address issues raised by me in the rough draft.

The School of Diplomacy does not award grades of D in graduate classes. Final grades below 70% will be entered into the gradebook as an F.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to procedures outlined in the Diplomacy School Academic Integrity Policy. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the course and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible.

All assignments for this course must be submitted online through Blackboard. Instructions are at the following URL:

[http://blogs.shu.edu/techtips/files/safeassign\\_student.pdf](http://blogs.shu.edu/techtips/files/safeassign_student.pdf)

Students with disabilities should contact Disabilities Support Services for special accommodations.

### **Class Schedule**

NOTE: Sessions with a class meeting will be denoted with (CM) below

January 16:	Introduction. (CM) Administrative Matters
January 23:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
January 30:	Edwards available for email consults only.
February 6:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
February 13:	<b>No Class. Research Designs Due. Assignments submitted to Blackboard.</b>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/1328/wikipedia-founder-discourages-academic-use-of-his-creation>

February 20:	Feedback on Research Designs. (CM)
February 27:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
March 6:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
March 13:	<b>Spring Break – No Class</b>
March 20:	<b>Rough Drafts Due. No Class. Assignments submitted to Blackboard.</b>
March 27:	Feedback on Rough Drafts. (CM)
April 3:	<b>Op-Ed and Pitch Letter Rough Drafts Due. Assignments submitted to Blackboard.</b>
April 10:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
April 17:	<b>Holy Thursday – No Class</b>
April 24:	Individual Meetings (As Needed)
May 1:	Wrap-up (CM)
May 13:	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD AT 4PM.</b>
May 15:	<b>FINAL VERSION OF OP-ED AND PITCH LETTER DUE ON BLACKBOARD AT 4PM.</b>

### ***Particulars on Assignments:***

#### **Research Design**

The first written assignment in this class is a 15 page (double-spaced with 1" margins and 12 point fonts) research design that is due on February 13. In this paper you will do the following:

- Develop an international relations research question
- Discuss the importance of the question both for theory and policy
- Locate this question in the context of relevant literature
- Outline a strategy for answering this question addressing the following
  - Operationalize the dependent variable
  - Develop a series of alternative explanations for the outcome
  - Operationalize independent variables
  - Discuss case selection (what cases are you going to look at and why)
  - Develop a testing procedure (or, how you will test your arguments, and how you will know you are right)
- Offer a respectable bibliography comprised of academic research.

#### **Draft/Final Manuscript**

Your completed project will be a minimum of 30 pages (double-spaced with 1" margins and 12 point fonts) that will consist of the following elements to be noted as separate sections of the manuscript:

- 1) The Problem and its Importance
- 2) Literature Review
- 3) Research Design
- 4) Findings and Discussion
- 5) Conclusions
- 6) Bibliography

The finished product must consist **either** of a set of comparative case studies (if a qualitative project) or a set of multivariate statistical tests with discussion of statistical and substantive significance (if the project is quantitative). I expect the draft manuscript to have a completed set of findings

#### **Op-Ed**

As you're finishing your papers, you will also be preparing an op-ed summarizing your findings. This will be 800 words maximum, and written in the style of an editorial in *Foreign Policy*. Your op-ed must be preceded by an email pitch letter. More information about this assignment will be forthcoming.